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In the Specification:

Please delete the title "METHOD FOR DETECTION OF BIOLOGICAL FACTORS IN EPIDERMIS" and replace therefor with ~~METHODS AND KITS FOR OBTAINING AND ANALYZING SKIN SAMPLES FOR THE DETECTION OF NUCLEIC ACIDS~~

In the Claims:

Please cancel claims 1 to 10 without prejudice.

Please amend the claims as follows:

In claim 28, first line of the claim, delete "ICD" in insert therefor --irritant contact dermatitis (ICD)-- .

In claim 35, first line of the claim, delete "ACD" in insert therefor --allergic contact dermatitis (ACD)-- .

In claim 54, first line of the claim, delete "ACD" in insert therefor --allergic contact dermatitis (ACD)-- .

Please add the following new claims:

--64. A non-invasive method for obtaining a skin sample for use in isolating or detecting a nucleic acid in a skin sample, the method comprising:

(a) applying at least one application of an adhesive to the skin and removing the adhesive from the skin such that a sample comprising a nucleic acid adheres to the adhesive after its removal, or, scraping the skin with an instrument to remove a sample comprising a nucleic acid from the skin, thereby obtaining a skin sample comprising a nucleic acid;

(b) isolating or detecting the nucleic acid from the skin sample of step (a).

65. The method of claim 64, wherein the skin sample consists essentially of stratum corneum.